New forms of methane based compound fuels

4132. SHRI SURESH KALMADI :
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Western countries are researching on newer forms of methane based compound fuels available in abundance under sea;

(b) if so, whether India has moved in this direction and what extent;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether any under water oil exploration surveys were conducted in the last three years; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) and (b) Several countries like United States of America (USA), Canada, Germany and Japan, are engaged in the Research and Development (R&D) activities relating to gas hydrates, which are clathrate compounds of methane available on land and off-shore.

To keep abreast with the technological developments world-wide with the ultimate objective to harness gas hydrates, the National Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP) has been formulated by the Central Government. A road map has been prepared, which *inter-alia* envisages the resource estimation, core well drilling and pilot studies for production of gas from gas hydrates.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) and (b) above.

(d) and (e) Under the NGHP, multi-beam Swath Bathmetry and side-scan Sonar Surveys have been carried out during 2002 for gas hydrate studies in selected areas of the East and West Coast of the country.

FDI in petroleum sector

4133. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH :
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to take measures to boost FDI in the petroleum sector;

(b) if so, what are the measures proposed;

(c) by when they are proposed to be implemented; and

(d) what are the targets being proposed to be fixed for FDI ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Steering Committee on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) constituted by the Planning Commission has recommended enhancement of FDI limit to 100% in exploration and production, refining, marketing and oil and gas pipelines through automatic route of approval. This is under consideration of the Government.

(d) There are no specific targets fixed for FDI flow into the Petroleum Sector.

Leakage of gas in Mumbai

4134. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there was leakage of gas in Mumbai on 12th February, 2003;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what remedial action Government have taken to prevent such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) A fire incident took place in Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL)'s gas pipeline at Andheri (E), Mumbai on 13-2-2003.

(b) A company was carrying out Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) for laying the Optical Fibre Cable Ducts. Their drilling rod hit and made a hole in the MGL's gas pipeline resulting in sudden release of gas. At that time a nearby vendor at the road junction lit an incense stick, which resulted into a spontaneous ignition of the escaping gas with high flames.

(c) Some of the steps taken by MGL to avoid such incidents are as under :—

(i) Fixing pipeline markers along the pipeline routes for proper identification.

(ii) Giving pipeline route maps to Concerned State Governments and Municipal Corporations so as to avoid damages by external agencies while carrying out other jobs along the pipeline route.

(iii) Petrolling of pipelines regularly.